

# 2017 Training Graduates Lead Grassroots OHS Workshops

**Participants in the OHS Initiative's intensive 2017 "train-the-trainer" course have used the information and materials they were given to put on their own trainings at the grassroots level with workers, community members, and members of their organizations in Dhaka, Bangladesh.**

The new OHS trainers were part of a class of 29 people from five labor and health non-governmental organizations who received 20 days of training last year on key occupational health and safety topics, as well on labor law and gender issues. The five-day resident course, followed by 15 one-day training sessions, built upon their previous training capabilities to expand the repertoire of workshops they are now prepared to give to the staff, members and supporters of their organizations.

For example, three field organizers for the OSHE Foundation (Occupational Safety, Health and Environment Foundation), have put on five day-long workshops on topics including workplace hazard identification, ergonomics, control of hazards, OHS issues particularly important for women workers, as well as labor law, leadership and life skills. These workshops were attended by more than 450 workers and community members.

A 2017 training participant from the public health organization Gonoshasthaya Kendra (GK) has



**Small group work during the 2017 "Train-the-trainer" course.**

conducted many grassroots workshops in the past on personal hygiene and first aid. Based on last year's 20-day TOT series, he has added occupational health and safety issues to his presentations so they now better address the reality of the people GK serves. Since last November, he has reached 800 people through his base-level public health and occupational health workshops.

## **Plans for 2018**

All of the 2017 participants – 14 men and 15 women – will receive five days of "refresher training" in 2018 to solidify their understanding and confidence in presenting workplace health and safety issues to their constituents. They will also be organizing two one-day seminars to strengthen their ability to reach garment workers. The first will focus on "Gender and OHS" and highlight the particular workplace and social hazards facing women workers. Continued on page 3



## **Highlights of 2018 Work Plan**

- Five days of refresher training for the 2017 participants
- Six meetings of the "Trainers' Network"
- Ongoing support for trainers conducting their own OHS workshops
- Recruitment and needs assessment for the 2018 "Training of Trainers" participants
- Two meetings of the Expert Committee to review curriculum and materials
- Twenty days of the 2018 Training of Trainers course
- One-day special seminars on "Gender and OHS" and "Youth and OHS"
- Four meetings of the Governing Board of the Initiative
- 18-month evaluation of the project in June 2018

## Member organizations of the OHS Initiative

The OHS Initiative for Workers and Community consists of six Bangladeshi non-governmental organizations. These organizations each have one representative on the Initiative's Governing Board and the California Collaborative has a seventh seat on the Board. The Initiative's member organizations are:

**Bangladesh Center for Worker Solidarity (BCWS)** is one of the country's most prominent labor rights groups. Former garment workers founded BCWS in 2001 to improve working conditions and promote workers' rights by building the capacity of workers to advocate for themselves, and providing services such as labor rights education, leadership training and legal aid.

**Bangladesh Institute for Labour Studies (BILS)** provides research and information on labor laws and economic issues to unions and worker organizations in a variety of industrial sectors. BILS is widely respected among labor groups and works in an ecumenical fashion with all sectors of the fractured labor movement in Bangladesh.

**Bangladesh Occupational Safety, Health and Environment Foundation (OSHE)** is a leading OHS non-governmental organization that conducts training, research, policy advocacy and support services for workers in the garment and shipbreaking industries, among other sectors.

**Gonoshasthaya Kendra (GK)** is a public health organization with clinics and hospitals serving Bangladesh's poor, including workers in many industries. GK's health facilities in Dhaka and Savar have also treated Rana Plaza collapse survivors and their families, as well as injured workers in numerous other industries.

**IndustriALL Bangladesh Council (IBC)** is made up of more than 20 trade unions in the garment, chemical and metalworking industries, including a dozen unions in the garment industry. The IBC is the national council of unions affiliated with the Geneva-based IndustriALL Global Union.

**Naripokkho** is a women's organization that provides information, training and support on gender issues for women workers on topics such as domestic violence and social discrimination. Naripokkho works with garment workers and their families in the Savar industrial area of Dhaka, including survivors of the Rana Plaza building collapse.



## Role of the California Collaborative

The California Collaborative, formed in 2015 to support the creation of the OHS Initiative, consists of four OHS organizations in the state of California: Hesperian Health Guides in Berkeley; Labor Occupational Health Program (LOHP) at the University of California at Berkeley; Labor Occupational Safety and Health (LOSH) program at the University of California at Los Angeles; and the Maquiladora Health and Safety Support Network (MHSSN) in Berkeley.

The California Collaborative raised \$54,000 for the first year of operations, and \$72,000 for the current year of activities. The Collaborative is committed to raising the funds needed for the third year of operations, after which the project will transition to becoming self-sustaining.

The Collaborative has worked with the staff and Governing Board of the Initiative, as requested, to provide technical assistance on both OHS and pedagogical issues, and to provide appropriate curriculum and teaching materials. The Collaborative has also collected and posted a web page of Bangla-language materials on occupational health and safety.

In addition, the MHSSN hosts a quarterly conference call for OHS professionals in North America to report on OHS issues in Bangladesh, covering activities of the OHS Initiative as well as other national and international efforts to improve workplace safety and health in Bangladesh.



**Participants in the 2017 “Train-the-trainers” course at the Gonoshasthya Kendra conference center in Savar.**

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The second will target “Youth and OHS” to address the higher rates of injury and illness among young workers that occur in Bangladesh (and everywhere else in the world!).

The OHS Initiative is planning to hire another Training Officer this year whose primary tasks will be to support the 2017 training participants as they plan and conduct their own workshops in the field.

The Initiative staff will help the trainers with lesson plans, materials and coordinating guest speakers for the grassroots programs. In addition, the new Training Officer will be conducting six one-day “Trainers Network” meetings throughout 2018 to facilitate building a mutual support network among the Initiative participants. The plan is to exchange experiences and share materials that have been effective in reaching audiences which often have limited literacy and limited time to participate in OHS workshops.

The organizations that make up the Initiative will recruit from their membership a second class for the

20-day training-of-trainers for 2018. Workshops for these 30 new trainers will begin in the summer after the observation of Ramadan. A needs assessment for the new group of participants will be conducted, and the Expert Committee will assist the Initiative training staff to revise the 2017 TOT curriculum and materials based on last year’s experience and the 2018 needs assessment results.

Evaluations of the 2017 ToT course revealed that 100% of the participants “felt confident they can conduct” their own OHS trainings. Suggestions for the 2018 ToT course included incorporating more female instructors and resource persons, conducting more field trips to operating factories, and expanding the number of OHS and labor law topics covered.

If the second year trainings prove to be as successful as the first, the 2018 class of ToT participants will be ready to begin leading their own OHS workshops by October, as well as participating in special follow-up seminars and the ongoing Trainers’ Network meetings.



## Finances for Years Two and Three

The first year of the Initiative was funded by donations of \$54,000 from OHS professional associations, individuals, and human rights organizations. The current year of operations includes an expanded Dhaka staff and activities requiring \$72,000 in funds. The second year contributors include:

- Institution of Occupational Safety and Health (UK) – renewed grant
- World Solidarity Movement (Belgium) – renewed grant
- LUSH Charity Pot (Canada) – renewed grant
- San Francisco Donors Group (US) – renewed grant
- American Industrial Hygiene Association (US)
- Global Work Foundation (US)
- Individual OHS professionals

The third year of the OHS Initiative – January to December 2019 – will have a larger budget to fund a larger staff and expanded activities to support the first two classes of trainers and the third group of 30 to be recruited and trained that year. The Initiative will develop a plan by the end of 2019 to become self-sustaining.

“ This is an important project as it’s designed to help build capacity within Bangladeshi communities. Once trainers are trained, they will be able to provide training to many, thereby raising awareness of health and safety more widely. IOSH is very pleased to be involved and we’re delighted that the project has made such a positive start. ”

– Richard Jones

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